

The gentleman also knows that we passed a recovery and reinvestment bill that had over \$250 billion of tax relief, some for individuals and some for small businesses, some for businesses generally. About 35 percent of that bill was tax relief for our citizens. The other percentage of that bill was for investment, was for dealing with those who have been put at deepest risk by the economic crisis, in terms of losing jobs, in terms of not being able to feed their families and not having health care available to them.

So I say to my friend that, as we move forward on the budget, and as we look to the administration for the clarification that the gentleman seeks, appropriately, in my opinion, and in our opinion, a more specific outline of how the administration's going to proceed, we will have that in consideration when we produce a budget. And as I say, we intend to produce a responsible budget that looks towards deficit reduction. That obviously won't be until some time from now. We've got to turn this economy around, start creating jobs which, hopefully, will have the effect of the stock market going up, not down, which is to the interest of all of us.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I yield back my time.

VOTING RIGHTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TONKO. Two and a third centuries ago, before our United States Capitol had even been imagined, the Founders were asking a question we hear in the District of Columbia to this day, and that is, how can we cut out a city from its home State and put it under the direct rule of Congress without violating the principles that the Revolutionary War fought to secure?

James Madison argued that there was only one way around that hypocrisy, "to provide for the rights and the consent of the citizens inhabiting it." And further, its people "will have had their voice in the election of the government which is to exercise authority over them."

That was the intent of our Founders. Those were the conditions for this District to exist, but they have not been upheld. 233 years later, of all the world's democracies, there is only one national capital without full voting rights. Washington, D.C., this city full of monuments to democracy, holds that distinction. At last, that's on the verge of changing.

Soon this House will vote on a bill to give the District of Columbia a voting Member of the House of Representatives. I urge my colleagues in this Chamber to finally give the people of Washington, D.C. a vote in this great body.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KRATOVLJ). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

STAFF-LED TOURS OF THE CAPITOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern about the difficulties Member offices are experiencing offering staff-led tours of the Capitol.

As Chair of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee, I am fully committed to making sure Member offices can continue providing this important service to their constituents.

The Capitol is not a museum. It is a living, breathing institution at the core of our representative democracy. Staff-led tours give our constituents a chance to experience the work that goes on here on a personalized level.

When there was talk last year about eliminating staff-led tours, we made clear at our oversight hearings that preserving those tours should be one of the highest priorities for the Capitol Visitor Center. Reflecting that priority, we included a provision in last year's Legislative Branch Appropriations bill prohibiting the elimination of staff-led tours.

However, preserving the existence of the tours and putting a button on the CVC Web site is simply not enough. We also need to make sure that the system in place doesn't diminish Member offices' ability to offer staff-led tours. Mr. BRADY and I intend to work aggressively over the next few weeks to ensure that improvements to the system arrive before the peak visitor season hits.

Staff who give tours should receive training, but we need to make sure that the time requirements make sense, that the training is consistent and effective, and that classes are offered frequently enough to meet Member office needs. We also need to make sure that we don't homogenize the Capitol tour and turn this beautiful institution into a museum.

Staff-led tours offer something that guide-led tours cannot, a personalized experience that incorporates items of State and local interest. We need to make sure that we don't take that personal touch out of the tour process.

We also need to make sure that Member offices are given clear information about how to accommodate their constituents if the on-line reservation system shows all the slots for a given day are taken.

The CVC Web site and reservation system also could stand improvement, particularly standardizing the on-line process for booking staff-led tours so that you don't have to hunt and peck to figure out how to book one.

I look forward to working with Mr. BRADY and the authorizing committees on these issues so we can make the existing system more user-friendly, without compromising security or overloading the Capitol building.

And I encourage and ask all Members if they have suggestions to please offer them to us.

□ 1915

DEFENDERS OF THE ALAMO THAT DIED MARCH 6, 1836 BY MARY ANN NOONON GUERRA—HISTORIAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, 163 years ago this night, on March the 5th, 1836, would be the last night for a group of individuals who came from all over the United States. They were from most of the States. They were from numerous foreign countries. They were odd sorts of individuals. They were frontiersmen, landowners, lawyers, unemployed. They were of all races—black, white and brown—but they were all volunteers, and most of them knew that this would be their last night after spending 12 days defending an old, beat-up Spanish fort that had already been over 100 years old. It was now a mission but also a fortress, what we call the Alamo.

You see, this odd bunch of individuals ended up there because all of them had ended up and had come to Texas from different parts of the country—from Mexico, from Europe—to seek a new life.

Backing up in history a little bit, the country of Spain had claimed most of Central America and Mexico, which included Texas at the time. Mexico decided to revolt against Spain. That revolution was successful, and in 1824, the country of Mexico adopted a constitution drafted very similarly to ours, which gave civil liberties to all people in Mexico, which included Texas.

But Mexico had a problem with a dictator. His name was Santa Anna, and when he became dictator of Mexico, he abolished the Constitution of 1824. He eliminated civil rights. He abolished the right to be tried by a jury, and he imposed dictator powers on Mexico. That offended people who lived in what is now Texas. It offended people of all races. So, in 1835, a revolution started in Texas.